

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A content management system comprising:

a network appliance configured to be deployed in a local area network and/or remote office network, wherein the appliance is configured to communicate with a computing device in the corresponding network and the appliance includes, or accesses, various systems, software and devices that facilitate content management within the corresponding network; and

a computer readable medium carrying computer executable instructions which enable the computing device to, upon placement of the network appliance in communication with the computing device, identify the network appliance and enable the network appliance to access selected content on the computing device.

2. A system as in claim 1, wherein the network appliance is enabled to copy selected content from the computing device to the network appliance such that the content is made accessible to other users on the network or remote users.

3. A system as in claim 1, wherein the network appliance is placed in communication with the computing device via wireless communication systems on each of the network appliance and the computing device.

4. A system as in claim 1, wherein the appliance has an associated database and policy engine that incorporates various rules for the handling of content created on, or sent to, the appliance.

5. A system as in claim 4, wherein the various rules relate to one or more of the distribution, storage, sharing, and secure and reliable backup of content, on both local and remote devices.

6. A system as in claim 4, wherein the appliance is configured to create, update, and maintain databases located at remote locations, and also to permit remote users to access local content, either directly or by way of an Internet-based service.

7. A system as in claim 1, wherein the network appliance further performs a function selected from the group consisting of: content backup with multiple versions; content sharing with user-selected accessibility; and content indexing.

8. A system as in claim 1, wherein the network appliance further performs a function selected from the group consisting of: firewall services; network computing device diagnostics and monitoring, network use statistics, and usage reporting.

9. A system as in claim 1, further comprising a remote content management service, wherein the remote content management service is configured to communicate with and interface between the network appliance and remote users and/or systems such that the remote users and/or systems can access content stored on the network appliance.

10. A system as in claim 9, wherein the remote content management service enables remote users and systems to gain remote access to the computing device.

11. A system as in claim 9, wherein the remote content management service provides a function selected from the group consisting of: content backup with versions and remote content sharing.

12. A system as in claim 9, wherein the remote content management service contains a content index of the content on the computing device, wherein the content index is accessible by authorized remote users and/or systems.

13. A content management system comprising:

a wireless enabled network appliance configured to be deployed in a local area network, wherein the appliance facilitates content management within the network;

a wireless enabled computing device, wherein the computing device comprises a computer readable medium carrying computer executable instructions which enable the computing device to, upon placement of the network appliance in wireless range of the computing device, provide permission to the network appliance to access selected content on the computing device; and

a remote content management service, wherein the remote content management service is configured to communicate with and interface between the network appliance and remote users and/or systems such that the remote users and/or systems can access content stored on the network appliance and/or the computing device.

14. A system as in claim 13, wherein the remote content management service provides a function selected from the group consisting of: content backup with versions and remote content sharing.

15. A system as in claim 13, wherein the network appliance is enabled to copy selected content from the computing device such that the content is made accessible to other users on the network or remote users.

16. A system as in claim 13, wherein the permission is provided automatically with no user input.

17. A system as in claim 13, wherein the appliance(s) has an associated database and policy engine that incorporates various rules for the handling of content created on, or sent to, the network.

18. A system as in claim 17, wherein the various rules relate to one or more of the distribution, storage, sharing, and secure and reliable backup of such content, on both local and remote devices.

19. A system as in claim 13, wherein the appliance is configured to create, update, and maintain databases located at remote locations.

20. A system as in claim 13, wherein the network appliance further performs a function selected from the group consisting of: content backup with multiple versions; content sharing with user-selected accessibility; and content indexing.

21. A system as in claim 13, wherein the network appliance further performs a function selected from the group consisting of: firewall services; network computing device diagnostics and monitoring, network use statistics, and usage reporting.

22. A method for providing automated data storage and file sharing services, the method comprising the acts of:

providing a wireless-enabled computing device within a local area network;

installing software on a computing device, the software enabling the computing to engage in wireless communications with a content management network appliance; and

placing a content management network appliance within wireless range of the wireless-enabled computing device, whereby the wireless-enabled computing device and the content management network appliance automatically initiate communication with each other.

23. A method as in claim 22, wherein the content management network appliance automatically inventories the computing device to identify data to be backed-up and/or made available to other users or systems.

24. A method as in claim 22, wherein the computing device automatically identifies to the network appliance data to be backed-up and/or made available to other local users or systems and/or remote users or systems.

25. A method as in claim 22, further comprising the act of backing up data from at least one of the wireless-enabled computing devices onto a storage medium on the network appliance.

26. A method as in claim 25, wherein the backed up copy of the data on the network appliance has metadata associated with it that identifies which users may access the data.

27. A method as in claim 22, wherein the network appliance further coordinates the act of backing up data from the computing device onto a remote storage medium.

28. A method as in claim 22, wherein data that is backed up on the network appliance is selectively available to be shared between client computers, wherein the degree of availability may be selected by a user.

29. A method as in claim 22, wherein the network appliance provides connectivity to the Internet and data sharing and redundancy services between the local area network and a remote service, remote computers, and/or remotes systems.

30. In a computing network, a computer program product for implementing a method suitable for use on a wireless enabled computing device in a local area network, the computer program product comprising:

a computer readable medium carrying computer executable instructions for performing the method, wherein the method comprises:

configuring wireless systems on the computing device to monitor for a wireless enabled network appliance;

upon the wireless system on the computing device identifying a wireless enabled network appliance, verifying whether the network appliance has permission to access the computing device; and

upon verifying that the wireless enabled network appliance has permission to access the computing device, providing access to selected content on the computing device to the network appliance.